

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-16 (canceled).

Claim 17 (currently amended) A system comprising

(a) a support device for use between a floor, a rib and a roof when the rib is disposed between the floor and roof and is substantially perpendicular to each of the floor and roof, said support device comprising:

an expander; and

a pair of resilient members each having a proximal end adapted for connection to the expander and a distal end curved away from the expander;

wherein said expander is linearly expandable to drive the distal ends of said pair of resilient members away from each other in opposed directions such that, upon linear expansion of the expander with the support device disposed between the floor, rib and roof, the expander can drive the distal ends of said pair of resilient members into engagement with the floor and the roof so that the resilient members bow and cause a portion of said support device to be driven into abutment against the rib in a direction that is substantially transverse to the opposed directions; and

(b) a rib, a floor and a roof of a mining roadway, the rib being disposed between the floor and roof and being substantially perpendicular to the floor and roof, the support device being disposed between the floor, the rib and the roof.

Claim 18 (currently amended) The support device system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the expander comprises an inner member 20 that slides within an outer member 22.

Claim 19 (currently amended) The support device system as claimed in claim 18, wherein the inner member 20 is straight.

Claim 20 (cancelled)

Claim 21 (currently amended) The support device system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the expander comprises expansion means for selective linear movement of the expander between an expanded configuration which permits tensioning of the support device against the rib and an unexpanded configuration which inhibits the tensioning.

Claim 22 (currently amended) The support device system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the distal ends of the resilient members have sawtooth profiles.

Claim 23 (currently amended) The support device system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the resilient members are made from pre-curved spring steel.

Claim 24 (currently amended) The support device system as claimed in claim 21, comprising locking means for selectively locking the expander in either the

expanded or unexpanded configuration.

Claim 25 (currently amended) The ~~support device~~ system as claimed in claim 24, wherein the locking means is fixed to the support device.

Claim 26 (currently amended) The ~~support device~~ system as claimed in claim 24, wherein the locking means is detachable from the support device.

Claim 27 (previously presented) A support device for use between a floor, a rib and a roof, the support device comprising:

an expander;

a pair of resilient members, each of the resilient members having a proximal end for connection to the expander and a distal end that curves away from the expander with the proximal end connected to the expander; and

a lock for locking the expander in an expanded configuration whereby the pair of resilient members can be locked in engagement with the floor and roof respectively with the expander in the expanded configuration.

Claim 28 (previously presented) The support device as claimed in claim 27, wherein the expander comprises expansion means for selective linear movement of the expander between the expanded configuration which permits tensioning of the support device against the rib and an unexpanded configuration which inhibits the tensioning.

Claim 29 (previously presented) The support device as claimed in claim 27, wherein the distal end of each of the resilient members has a sawtooth profile.

Claim 30 (previously presented) The support device as claimed in claim 27, wherein the resilient members are made from pre-curved spring steel.

Claim 31 (previously presented) The support device as claimed in claim 27, wherein the lock is fixed to the support device.

Claim 32 (previously presented) The support device as claimed in claim 27, wherein the lock is detachable from the support device.

Claim 33 (previously presented) The support device as claimed in claim 28, wherein the expander comprises an inner member 20 that slides within an outer member 22.

Claim 34 (previously presented) The support device as claimed in claim 28, wherein the inner member 20 is straight.

Claim 35 (previously presented) A system comprising: (a) the support device of claim 28, and (b) a rib, a floor and a roof of a mining roadway, the rib being disposed between the floor and roof and being substantially perpendicular to the floor and roof, the support device being disposed between the floor, the rib and the roof.

Claim 36 (new) A support device for use between a floor, a rib and a roof when the rib is disposed between the floor and roof and is substantially perpendicular to each of the floor and roof, said support device comprising:

an expander; and

a pair of resilient members each having a proximal end adapted for connection to the expander and a distal end curved away from the expander, the distal ends of the resilient members having sawtooth profiles; and

wherein said expander is linearly expandable to drive the distal ends of said pair of resilient members away from each other in opposed directions such that, upon linear expansion of the expander with the support device disposed between the floor, rib and roof, the expander can drive the distal ends of said pair of resilient members into engagement with the floor and the roof so that the resilient members bow and cause a portion of said support device to be driven into abutment against the rib in a direction that is substantially transverse to the opposed directions.

Claim 37 (new) A support device for use between a floor, a rib and a roof when the rib is disposed between the floor and roof and is substantially perpendicular to each of the floor and roof, said support device comprising:

an expander; and

a pair of resilient members each having a proximal end adapted for connection to the expander and a distal end curved away from the expander, the resilient members being made from pre-curved spring steel,

wherein said expander is linearly expandable to drive the distal ends of said

pair of resilient members away from each other in opposed directions such that, upon linear expansion of the expander with the support device disposed between the floor, rib and roof, the expander can drive the distal ends of said pair of resilient members into engagement with the floor and the roof so that the resilient members bow and cause a portion of said support device to be driven into abutment against the rib in a direction that is substantially transverse to the opposed directions.